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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
May 4, 2006



Department of State

TELEGRAM

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SIONARIES, BRITISH. THOUGH AMIN MAY "GET AWAY WITH IT" IN THE SENSE THAT HE WILL SUCCEED IN EXPELLING MOST NON-UGANDANS FROM THE COUNTRY, WE DOUBT HIS COUNTRY OR PEOPLE WILL BE ANY BETTER OFF FOR HIS POLICIES. THE US HAS DEPLORED THE GENERAL'S ANTI-ZIONIST CAMPAIGN (WHICH OFTEN BECOMES AN ANTI-JEWISH CAMPAIGN), AND THOUGH WE COULD DO LITTLE ABOUT IT WE WERE DISTRESSED BY THE EXPULSION OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY AS A GROSS VIOLATION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS. THE "DRASTIC DECISION" AGAINST THE BRITISH IS ALSO DOING THE COUNTRY NO GOOD. WE ACCOUNT FOR THE CESSATION OF VERBAL ATTACKS AGAINST THE US AND STOPPAGE OF THE INCIDENTS OF MOLESTATIONS OF OUR CITIZENS--THE TWO BICATERAL ASPECTS OF MOST CONCERN TO US--PRIMARILY TO AMIN'S PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER, MORE IMMEDIATELY THREATENING TARGETS OR TO A DELIBERATE DECISION ON HIS PART TO LEAVE US ALONE FOR THE PRESENT. WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE RECENT LULL TO REDUCE OUR PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY BY OVER A THIRD. WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT AMIN WILL CONTINUE TO LEAVE US ALONE, FOR WE FORESEE THAT--IF HE REMAINS IN POWER--HE WILL NEED ADDITIONAL SCAREGOATS TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE DIRE EFFECTS OF HIS POLICIES, AND WE PROVIDE A CONVENIENT TARGET. WE ALSO NOTE THE EXISTENCE OF SEVERAL "TIME-BOMBS" THAT MAY EXPLODE TO DESTROY OUR RELATIONS WITH THE GOV; OUR HISTORICAL CLOSE TIES TO ISRAEL, AMIN'S OBSESSIVE ENEMY; THE POSSIBILITY OF A BOYCOTT OF UGANDAN COFFEE BY AMERICAN BUYERS; THE LAW-SUITS IN NEW YORK BEING PURSUED BY ISRAELI FIRMS SEEKING PAYMENT OF THEIR DEBTS OWED BY THE GOV; POTENTIAL TRIGGERING OF THE HICKENLOOPER AMENDMENT OWING TO NATIONALIZATION OF AMERICAN PROPERTY; A CUT-OFF OF AMERICAN AID THAT WOULD LEAD AMIN TO WRITE US OFF AS WORSE THAN USELESS. UNFORTUNATELY THESE ARE LARGELY MATTERS BEYOND USG CONTROL. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE QUIETLY TO REDUCE THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRY SO THAT WE WILL BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO COPE WITH FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE AMIN REGIME. GENERAL AMIN'S REGIME MUST BE ONE OF THE MOST RADICAL TO HAVE APPEARED IN BLACK AFRICA SINCE THE ERA OF INDEPENDENCE BEGAN, NOT RADICAL IN THE SENSE OF "LEFTIST" BUT MORE IN THE SENSE OF "EXTREMIST." THE POLICIES DECREED BY THE GENERAL DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS HAVE BEEN BASED ON A RAMPAGING XENOPHOBIA. BUT THAT HAS NOT BEEN THE ONLY EXTREMIST CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS REGIME. WITHOUT ANY FEAR OF EXAGGERATION IT CAN BE DESCRIBED AS:

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(A) RACIST: ENOUGH EVIDENCE IS PROVIDED BY THE TREATMENT OF THE CITIZEN ASIANS, WHO WERE SINGLED OUT FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THEIR RACIAL ORIGIN.

(B) ERRATIC AND UNPREDICATABLE: GENERAL AMIN HAS JUMPED AND SHIFTED IN SO MANY DIFFERENT, OFTEN CONTRADICTORY, DIRECTIONS DURING THE PAST YEAR THAT MOST OBSERVERS OF THE UGANDAN SCENE HAVE LONG SINCE GIVEN UP TRYING TO PREDICT WHAT HIS NEXT MOVE WILL BE.

(C) BRUTAL: EVEN "BARBARIC" MIGHT NOT BE TOO STRONG A TERM TO DESCRIBE THE CAMPAIGN OF OPPRESSION AND VICTIMIZATION THAT HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT AGAINST THE BLACK UGANDAN ELITE, ALL APPARENTLY WITH THE SANCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

(D) INEPT: THE LOW STATE OF THE ECONOMY AND OF GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION TODAY IS TRAGIC, ESPECIALLY WHEN VIEWED AGAINST THE ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC POTENTIAL AND GENERALLY ABLE CIVIL SERVICE WITH WHICH THE COUNTRY WAS ENDOWED ONLY 24 MONTHS AGO.

(E) BELLICOSE; WHEN HE CANNOT GET A HEADLINE ANY OTHER WAY AMIN IS FOND OF THREATENING ONE OR MORE OF HIS NEIGHBORS. HIS FAVORITE TARGETS HAVE BEEN TANZANIA, RWANDA, AND THE SUDAN. HE HAS NOT ATTACKED KENYA AND ZAIRE, PROBABLY BECAUSE HE IS AFRAID OF THEM.

(F) IRRATIONAL: AMIN NEARLY CONSISTENTLY HAS PURSUED POLICIES THAT HAVE BEEN INIMICAL TO THE WELFARE AND PROGRESS OF HIS OWN COUNTRY AND PEOPLE, USUALLY OUT OF IGNORANCE, BUT PERHAPS ALSO BECAUSE OF HIS PARANOIA AND MEGALOMANIA.

(G) RIDICULOUS: AMIN'S BUFFOONERY HAS BEEN TOO WELL PUBLICIZED TO REQUIRE ILLUSTRATION, AND IT HAS PERHAPS NOT BEEN SURPRISING THAT HE IS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO MANY AFRICAN LEADERS WHO NONETHELESS HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO QUESTION PUBLICLY HIS FITNESS TO RULE, IN SOME CASES PROBABLY BECAUSE THEIR OWN CREDENTIALS MAY NOT BE MUCH BETTER.

(H) MILITARISTIC--SINCE THE REGIME'S SOLE FIRM SUPPORT SEEMS TO BE THE ARMY, IT IS PERHAPS NATURAL IF DEPLORABLE THAT WHAT USED TO BE A RELATIVELY PEACEFUL AND SECURE COUNTRY IS NOW

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PERVADED BY FEAR OF ITS OWN "SECURITY" FORCES.

3. BUT OF ALL OF THE CHARACTERISTICS THE ONE WHICH HAS BEEN MOST SALIENT DURING 1972 HAS BEEN THE SEVERAL MANIFESTATIONS OF GENERAL AMIN'S EXTREME XENOPHOBIA. DURING THE LAST THREE-QUARTERS OF THIS PAST YEAR AMIN HAS DECREED THAT THE COUNTRY CAN GET ALONG WITHOUT, IN FACT WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITHOUT:

(A) ANY ISRAELIS, WHO WERE PROVIDED MILITARY TRAINING TO HIS ARMY AND AIR FORCE, AS WELL AS IMPORTANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN OTHER AREAS, PLUS THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES DOING A GOOD MANY OF THE BIG GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT AND MILITARY PROJECTS;

(B) SOME 50,000 ASTANS WHO PROVIDED THE MASS OF THE COUNTRY'S BUSINESS SKILLS, IN TRADE, DISTRIBUTION AND LIGHT INDUSTRY, AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLED ARTISANAL TALENTS OF ALL KINDS, THE COUNTRY'S ESSENTIAL MIDDLE-CLASS, PLUS AT LEAST TWO OF ITS BIGGEST INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES WHICH DOMINATED THE "LEADING", MODERN SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY;

(C) THE FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS, WHO PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, AS WELL AS PROVIDING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE IN OTHER SECTORS. THOUGH THEY WERE NOT EXPELLED, THEIR DEPARTURE AND LOSS TO UGANDA RESULTED FROM THEIR ABHORRENCE OF SOME OF AMIN'S POLICIES AND HIS INABILITY TO PROVIDE AN ATMOSPHERE AND THE SUBSTANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE VOLUNTEER TO CARRY OUT THEIR ASSIGNMENTS;

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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
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(D) THE FOREIGN MISSIONARIES, WHO PROVIDE A GREAT DEAL OF THE MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL (AS WELL AS RELIGIOUS) SERVICES OF THE COUNTRY, MOSTLY FREE OF CHARGE, AS WELL AS FINANCING EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN THE RURAL AREAS WHERE THESE TEND TO BE NEGLECTED BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT;

(E) THE BRITISH EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY, WHO PROVIDE BUSINESS SKILLS, TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND OTHER TECHNICIANS, AND WHO, ALONG WITH THE ASIANS AND THE MISSIONARIES, REALLY CARRY THE BURDEN OF ADMINISTRATION, MEDICINE AND EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY, AS WELL AS KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS SUCH AS BANKING AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCING.

4. THE QUESTION IS, WILL AMIN "GET AWAY WITH IT." AS PEOPLE ARE FOND OF ASKING; THAT IS, WILL UGANDA SURVIVE HIS XENOPHOBIA?

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(C) THE "DRASTIC DECISION" PROMISED BY THE GENERAL AGAINST THE BRITISH IS ONLY NOW UNFOLDING, BUT WE ANTICIPATE THAT IT WILL END UP BEING MORE SERIOUS THAN IT SEEMS TODAY, AS HAS

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BEEN THE CASE WITH MOST OF AMIN'S POLICIES. A YEAR FROM NOW THERE WILL PROBABLY BE VERY FEW BRITISH LEFT IN UGANDA, AND IN MOST CASES THIS WILL HAVE MEANT AN IMPROVERISHMENT OF THE COUNTRY.

(D) WE WERE DIRECTLY MOST CONCERNED OVER TWO ELEMENTS OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS: THE BROAD SWEEPING VERBAL ATTACKS ON THE US BY AMIN AND THE SEVERAL INCIDENTS OF MOLESTATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE MOLESTATIONS STOPPED ABOUT OCTOBER 1. THE VERBAL ATTACKS, WITH THE ONE EXCEPTION OF AMIN'S TELEGRAM OF DEC. 23 ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE BOMBINGS IN NORTH VIET-NAM, ALSO STOPPED AROUND OCTOBER 1. THESE CESSATIONS PROBABLY RESULTED FROM A VARIETY OF REASONS. THE RENEWED EFFORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER PROBABLY PLAYED A ROLE. BUT WE NOW BELIEVE THAT A MAJOR REASON WAS MORE LIKELY AMIN'S PREOCCUPATION WITH OTHER TARGETS (HE SEEMS TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE "ENEMY" AT A TIME) PLUS PERHAPS A DELIBERATE DECISION ON HIS PART TO LEAVE THE US ALONE WHILE HE DEALT WITH OTHERS WHOM HE CONSIDERED A GREATER THREAT TO HIS OWN SURVIVAL. DURING THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD-- THE LAST QUARTER OF 1972-- WE WERE ABLE TO USE THE LULL TO OUR OWN ADVANTAGE, NAMELY, THE EXFILTRATION FROM THE COUNTRY OF THE PEACE CORPS CONTINGENT AND SEVERAL HUNDRED OTHER AMCITS. THE TOTAL AMERICAN PRESENCE DROPPED IN THIS PERIOD FROM OVER 1,000 TO AROUND 640. THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF THIS "LULL" ALSO GAVE US THE TIME NEEDED TO DEVELOP AN E&E PLAN TAILORED TO THE GEOGRAPHIC PECULARITIES OF UGANDA.

6. THE FUTURE. WE SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, BECOME COMPLACENT BECAUSE OF THE LULL. WE MAY OUTLAST AMIN-AND HE HAS SO MANY

ENEMIES THAT HIS SUDDEN DEMISE WOULD SURPRISE NO ONE IN UGANDA-- BUT HE MAY ALSO BE AROUND FOR SOME TIME TO COME. IF THE LATTER TURNS OUT TO BE THE CASE HE WILL LIKELY NEED SOME ADDITIONAL SCAPEGOATS TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE LOW STATE INTO WHICH HE HAS DRIVEN HIS COUNTRY AND PEOPLE. THE US MAY WELL BECOME ONE OF THOSE SCAPEGOATS, EITHER BECAUSE HE IS FRESH OUT OF OTHER

CONVENIENT TARGETS (WE ARE CONVENIENT BECAUSE WE ARE FOREIGN, WESTERN, "IMPERALIST," MOSTLY WHITE, ETC.) OR BECAUSE ONE OF THE SEVERAL "TIME-BOMBS" THAT APPEAR TO US TO LIE ASTRIDE OUR RELATIONS WITH UGANDA HAS GONE OFF AND BROUGHT US TO THE

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GENERAL'S IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. THESE "TIME-BOMBS" INCLUDE:

(A) OUR HISTORICAL AND QUITE EVIDENT CLOSE ASSOCIATIONS WITH ISRAEL, AS THAT COUNTRY'S PRINCIPAL MILITARY, FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORTER. AMIN IS SO VIOLENTLY ANTI-ISRAELI THAT HIS WRATH AGAINST THEM MAY IN TURN BE DIRECTED AT US AS ISRAEL'S FRIEND.

(B) THE POSSIBILITY THAT ANTI-AMIN ELEMENTS IN THE US MAY ENGINEER A BOYCOTT OF UGANDAN COFFEE BY AMERICAN BUYERS. THIS WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO BRING AMIN'S WRATH DOWN ON US, EVEN THOUGH WE HAD PLAYED NO ROLE IN THE AFFAIR.

(C) THE LAW-SUITS NOW BEING PURSUED IN NEW YORK BY ISRAELI FIRMS WHICH ARE OWED MONEY BY AMIN'S GOVERNMENT. THE USG IS LIABLE TO GET CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF ONE OR MORE OF THESE SUITS, AGAIN WITH THE CHANCES GOOD THAT AMIN WILL TURN ON US, WHETHER WE ARE INNOCENT (NOT INVOLVED) OR NOT.

(D) AMIN'S NATIONALIZATION OF AMERICAN PROPERTY SUCH AS HARRY ENGEL'S ITS FIRM MIGHT EVENTUALLY TRIGGER THE HICKENLOOPER AMENDMENT, WHICH WOULD BE REGARDED BY AMIN AS AN UNFRIENDLY ACT.

(D) OUR UNWILLINGNESS OR INABILITY TO PROVIDE UGANDA ANY FURTHER AID MAY STIMULATE THE GENERAL TO WRITE US OFF AS WORSE THAN USELESS, WITH OBVIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR CONTINUED PRESENCE HERE.

7. IN CONCLUSION IT SEEMS FAIR TO SAY THAT MOST OF THESE POTENTIAL THREATS TO THE SMOOTH COURSE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH UGANDA ARE LARGELY MATTERS OUTSIDE USG CONTROL. THERE IS NO REASON TO HOPE THAT WE WILL BE MORE FORTUNATE THAN WERE THE ISRAELIS AND THE BRITISH, WHO WERE ALSO DONE IN PRIMARILY BY DEVELOPMENTS OVER WHICH THEY COULD EXERCISE LITTLE OR NO INFLUENCE. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO TAKE STEPS QUIETLY TO REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF AMERICANS IN UGANDA TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM AND TAKE OTHER APPROPRIATE STEPS THAT WILL ASSURE MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY IN CASE AMIN RESUMES THE ATTACK ON US.

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